Solemnities of the Lord
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Solemnities of the Lord

In addition to Christmas, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord, Easter and Pentecost, other important solemnities and feasts of our Lord are celebrated each year: Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ, Sacred Heart, Christ the King, the Presentation of the Lord, the Annunciation of the Lord, the Transfiguration of the Lord, and the Triumph of the Cross. These liturgies are considered in depth.
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Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord

The liturgical year is focused entirely on Jesus Christ. His life, death, resurrection and continued presence in the Holy Spirit are celebrated in every dimension of the church’s calendar:

• Sunday, the Lord’s Day
• the Easter Triduum, with the fifty days of the Easter season and the forty days of Lent
• Christmas, with the Christmas and Advent seasons
• feasts of Mary and the saints, faithful disciples of Christ
• ordinary weekdays: the gospel of Christ is proclaimed and the paschal mystery is celebrated every day

In this issue of the Bulletin we consider a further dimension of the liturgical year: the solemnities and feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ in ordinary time and those which are not part of the Lent-Easter and Advent-Christmas seasons. These include four major celebrations that are designated “solemnities of the Lord in ordinary time”:

• Trinity Sunday, first Sunday after Pentecost
• Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), Thursday after Trinity Sunday (transferred to the following Sunday in Canada)
• Sacred Heart, third Friday after Pentecost
• Christ the King, last Sunday of ordinary time.

Other solemnities and feasts that will be considered are the following:

• Presentation of the Lord (2 February, feast)
• Annunciation of the Lord (25 March, solemnity)
• Transfiguration of the Lord (6 August, feast)
• Triumph of the Cross (14 September, feast).

Some of these solemnities and feasts of the Lord celebrate specific incidents in the life of Jesus Christ: Presentation, Annunciation and Transfiguration.

Others are sometimes called “feasts of ideas” or “feasts of devotion”: Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ, Sacred Heart, Christ the King. These celebrate doctrines concerning our Lord or aspects of his person and mission formulated as a result of the church’s reflection on the mystery of Jesus Christ.
A third category commemorates incidents in the life of the church which subsequently have been related to the mystery of Christ more generally. Thus the feast of the Triumph of the Cross has its origins in the legendary discovery of the True Cross by Empress Helena in the year 320.

Two of the solemnities and feasts of the Lord are celebrated in February – March: Presentation and Annunciation. Three especially important solemnities occur in May or June, depending on the date of Easter: Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ and Sacred Heart. Two feasts fall in August – September: Transfiguration and Triumph of the Cross. Finally, one occurs in November: Christ the King.

Four of these feasts of the Lord are celebrated by the Eastern as well as Western churches: Presentation, Annunciation, Transfiguration and Triumph of the Cross. Another four, however, are peculiar to the West: Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ, Sacred Heart, and Christ the King. With the exception of Body and Blood of Christ and Sacred Heart, all of these solemnities and feasts are also celebrated by the Anglican and Lutheran churches.

Several celebrations: All of these solemnities and feasts constitute “repetition” within the liturgical calendar, inasmuch as the same mysteries of Jesus Christ are celebrated at other times of the year as well. Thus the Presentation is also presented to us in the gospels of December 29 and 30; the Annunciation in the gospels of the fourth Sunday of Advent and of December 20; the Transfiguration in the gospel of the second Sunday of Lent; the Triumph of the Cross in the Easter Triduum; Christ the King on Epiphany and Transfiguration; Body and Blood of Christ on Holy Thursday (and indeed at every eucharist); Sacred Heart on Good Friday and the fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday). Every liturgical celebration and every day in the life of the Christian celebrates the Trinity.

For our benefit: The “repetition” represented by these solemnities and feasts is deliberate and helpful to us. Many of the other celebrations of the same mysteries occur during times when our attention and energy is directed to one or another liturgical season. Having a special celebration on another occasion allows us to focus our attention more specifically on these mysteries of Jesus Christ. This is also the case for those mysteries that are celebrated daily (Trinity) and that might otherwise be taken for granted.

Celebrating Christ: The solemnities and feasts of our Lord considered in this issue of the Bulletin teach us much about Jesus Christ. Teaching is not the primary intention of the church, however. Instead, we celebrate the Risen Christ and proclaim God’s love, approaching the mystery of Christ from a variety of perspectives and savoring its manifold dimensions individually. In these solemnities and feasts we enter more fully into the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, we experience and respond to his presence more fully, we deepen our relationship with our savior. They are privileged opportunities in our lives and the lives of our church communities.

Eucharist: To appreciate the several solemnities and feasts of Jesus Christ we need to listen to the church’s liturgical texts and symbols. Here we will begin with the gospel and other scripture readings, then consider the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion and preface, and finally the gospel acclamation and entrance and communion antiphons of the eucharist.

Liturgy of the hours: Our view is expanded by next considering morning prayer and evening prayer of the liturgy of the hours. These contain additional scripture readings, psalm antiphons and antiphons for the canticle of Mary and canticle of
Zechariah, responsories and intercessions. In addition, the office of readings offers additional readings, antiphons and especially fine responsories.

Reflect and contemplate: In order to prepare to celebrate the solemnities and feasts of the Lord in a meaningful and transformative way, their texts, as outlined above, need to be contemplated and reflected upon. Read over the texts given below, study them, think about them, pray over them, pray with them, spend time with them, memorize some of them, let them become part of you.

Music: The songs that may be used during the eucharistic liturgy need to be added to the texts described above. They are found in our hymnal, Catholic Book of Worship and other resources.

All of these “special” texts and songs are linked to the “ordinary” texts of the eucharist and liturgy of the hours, especially the eucharist and the psalms and canticles.

Selected Reading


Adrian Nocent, The Liturgical Year, 4 vols. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press 1977)

Celebrating Well

It is important to celebrate these solemnities and feasts of Jesus Christ well. Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ, Sacred Heart, Christ the King, Presentation, Annunciation, Transfiguration and Triumph of the Cross are significant days in the life of the Christian community. To the extent that is possible, they should be important days in the lives of all members of the local church.

On Sunday: Three solemnities are always celebrated on Sunday: Holy Trinity, Body and Blood of Christ, and Christ the King. At the parish level it is a challenge to keep these from appearing to be “just another” Sunday. The others usually fall on weekdays, and in these cases the challenge is to have any serious observance of them at all by the parish as a whole.

At home: For those who are not likely to participate in weekday celebrations of the eucharist or of the liturgy of the hours on these feasts, prayers and readings for use at home might be distributed. These feasts are also occasions on which morning and/or evening prayer might be celebrated, especially if this is not the usual practice in the parish.

Preachers always have a special responsibility at major celebrations such as the solemnities and feasts of the Lord. These are not times for lectures on systematic theology, or simple lessons on the life of Jesus. These celebrations are supposed
to be meaningful and transformative in the lives of Christian women and men and children today. How can the mystery of Christ being celebrated be brought to touch people now?

Musicians also have a special responsibility for helping parishes celebrate these feasts well. Good choices of music, effective leadership, sufficient practice, coordination with other ministries, etc., all contribute to good celebration. The recommendations of *Catholic Book of Worship II* for each feast are given later.

The RCIA ideally will take the solemnities and feasts of the Lord into account in forming catechumens. Unfortunately, if the RCIA actually operates only from late September through Pentecost (as is the case in some parishes), most of these feasts will be ignored; only Christ the King, Presentation and Annunciation fall within this period. This is a great pity, as these feasts would provide a wonderful way to contemplate something of the mystery of Jesus Christ. RCIA leaders might wish to examine their scheduling with these feasts in mind.

**Spirituality:** Each of the solemnities and feasts of the Lord has an important contribution to make in terms of the spirituality of local church communities and of individual Christians. They provide different insights to questions such as, Who is Jesus Christ? Who is Jesus Christ for us? How are we to witness to Jesus Christ? How are we to carry out ministry and live as disciples today? Each has implications for social justice as well as spirituality, witness, ministry and discipleship.

**Special persons:** Some of the feasts of the Lord also bring to mind certain persons or groups within the local church community or in the wider civic or global community. The Transfiguration, for example, falls on the day on which the first atomic bomb was dropped, at Hiroshima. That gives rise to many serious reflections. The Purification leads us to think of parents of young children as well as grandparents and other elderly members of the parish and city. The Annunciation makes us think of people who are called to make difficult and significant decisions for their lives and the lives of others, often under pressure or stress. We think especially of young people – Mary was probably just a teenager at the time – who today have to make many serious decisions and who may have to resist peer pressure and other social influences.

The Triumph of the Cross helps to make us conscious – if this is needed – that the mystery of Christ's cross has to do with giving life, not with the glorification of suffering. Crosses such as being a victim of spousal abuse are not meant to be endured in a masochistic way. Rather, the real cross of Christ brings hope and leads to change.

Unity and diversity: Trinity Sunday can be both a celebration of the unity of humankind and of the bonds that exist among all women and men and children, and at the same a celebration of human diversity and pluralism. (An ancient image of the Trinity is called in Greek, *perichoresis*, which means literally, dancing in a circle. Round dances might be an appropriate mode of celebrating this solemnity in our homes.) Christ the King can be seen, not as a feast of political and social power and authority, but rather as a celebration of humble responsibility – responsibility for peace, justice, respect for persons and all of creation.

Sacred Heart is a tremendous affirmation of our humanity and of our capacity to love, as well as a powerful image of God's love and Christ's own humanity. The Body and Blood of Christ brings to mind the sharing of food and of everything that promotes life in its fullness. It also helps to realize that we, as church, are the body of Christ too.
Trinity Sunday

The liturgy considers the mystery of the Trinity from the point of view of the saving actions of the three Persons vis-à-vis humanity and all of creation. The more difficult question of the relationships that exist among the Persons of the Trinity is not a major consideration. In other words, the liturgy deals primarily with the activity of the Trinity outside of itself.

The work of the Trinity is seen as the expression of God's great love for humanity and all of creation. God sends Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit because God loves us so much. God makes the three Persons known to us—at least in part—because this is a way of showing how much God cares for us.

We are privileged to be called to live trinitarian lives, lives rooted in unity among persons while rejoicing in individual differences.

The scripture readings of this solemnity, taken as a whole, in no way provide a systematic theology of the Trinity. They do, however, proclaim God's love in diverse ways.

The feast of the Holy Trinity has been celebrated by the universal church since 1334.

Catholic Book of Worship II suggests the following songs:

- Father, Lord of earth 534
- Firmly I believe 533
- Glorious God 628
- Glory be to God the Father 528
- Glory to the Father 623
- Godlight 629
- Holy God 632
- Holy God, we praise thy name 631
- Holy, holy, holy 630
- Holy is God 633
- Now the silence 705
- O Father, whose creating hand 530
- O God, almighty Father 529
- Of the Father's love begotten 470
- On this day, the first of days 590
- Sing ye praises to the Father 531
- The living God 532
- To God the Father 535
- Who has known 476

Eucharist

Cycle A

The gospel quotes Jesus' discourse to Nicodemus: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life.”

The first reading, from the book of Exodus, tells both of God’s transcendence and of God’s mercy and love: the Lord is “a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.”
**The second reading** speaks of "the God of love and peace" who will be with us. It concludes with a trinitarian doxology: "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you."

**Cycle B**

**The gospel** gives the great commission to go out and baptize the nations "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

**In the first reading**, from Deuteronomy, we are told of the marvellous deeds God has done to reveal his great love for us: the creation and the redemptive acts of the exodus.

**The second reading** tells us that we are adopted children of God; we have received a spirit of adoption.

**Cycle C**

**The gospel** speaks especially of the promised (and now realized) coming of the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth [who] will guide you to all truth."

**The first reading** is from the book of Proverbs, and speaks about the Wisdom of God.

**In the second reading**, Paul tells us that "we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" and that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

**The opening prayer** calls us to live lives modeled on that of the Trinity:

Father,
you sent your Word to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy.
Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons,
by proclaiming and living our faith in you.

**The preface** proclaims the three persons of the Trinity as equal, undivided, yet one God.

We joyfully proclaim our faith
in the mystery of your Godhead.
You have revealed your glory
as the glory also of your Son
and of the Holy Spirit:
three Persons equal in majesty,
undivided in splendor,
yet one Lord, one God,
ever to be adored in your everlasting glory.

**In the antiphons and acclamations** of the eucharist we sing:

Blessed be God the Father and his only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit: for he has shown that he loves us.
Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: to God who is, who was, and who is to come.

You are the sons of God, so God has given you the Spirit of his Son to form your hearts and make you cry out: Abba, Father. (Gal 4:6)

Liturgy of the Hours

Scripture readings: At evening prayer 1 the reading from Romans proclaims, "How rich are the depths of God. To God be glory for ever." The reading at morning prayer (1 Corinthians 12: 4-6) speaks of the Spirit that bestows "a variety of gifts." Ephesians 4: 3-6 is read at evening prayer 2; it concludes, "there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God . . . ."

The antiphons constitute a number of short songs of praise to the Trinity.

Glory to you, O Trinity, one God in three equal Persons, as in the beginning, so now, and for ever.

Praise to the Holy Trinity and undivided Unity. Let us praise God for he has shown us his mercy.

Glory and honor to God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; glory and praise to him for endless ages.

We give you thanks, O God; we give you thanks, Trinity one and true, Divinity one and most high, Unity one and holy.

To you, O blessed Trinity, be worship and honor, glory and power, praise and joyful adoration through eternal ages.

May all your creatures give you fitting praise, adoration and glory, O blessed Trinity.

All things are from him, through him, and in him; to him be glory for ever.

O holy, undivided Trinity, Creator and Ruler of all that exists, may all praise be yours now, for ever, and for ages unending.

O Trinity most high, eternal and true: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Save, set us free and give us life, O blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, the God who is, who was, and who is to come.

With our whole heart and voice we acclaim you, O God; we offer you our praise and worship, unbegotten Father, only begotten Son, Holy Spirit, constant friend and guide; most holy and undivided Trinity, to you be glory for ever.

In the responsories we sing:

Let us worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; let us praise God for ever. To God alone be honor and glory.
All praise, all glory to you, O Holy Trinity. May we give thanks to you forever.

The intercessions begin:

The Father through the Holy Spirit has given life to the humanity of Christ his Son, and has made him a source of life for us.

Let us give all honor and glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The intercessions themselves proclaim the mystery of the Trinity:

Father, almighty and eternal God, send the Holy Spirit upon your Church in your Son's name

Send laborers into your harvest, Lord, to teach the truth to all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Father, send help to all who suffer persecution in the name of your Son

Father omnipotent, may all men come to acknowledge you, together with the Word and the Holy Spirit, as the one true God

Holy Father, send your Spirit to us who know not how to pray as we ought

Christ, Son of the living God, you asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon your Church

Come, Holy Spirit, that we may show your fruit in our lives, charity, joy, peace, equanimity, kindness, generosity

Father all powerful, you have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts, so that we cry: Abba, Father

Christ Jesus, you sent the Paraclete who proceeds from the Father to bear witness to you.

Office of Readings

The second and third antiphons of the office of readings offer interesting images of the three persons of the Trinity:

The Father is Love, the Son is grace, the Holy Spirit is their bond of fellowship; O blessed Trinity.

The Father utters the Truth, the Son is the Truth he utters, and the Holy Spirit is Truth; O blessed Trinity.

In the responsory we ask for wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment vis-à-vis the mystery of the Trinity.

May the glorious God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ give to us a spirit of wisdom to penetrate his revelation, and bring us to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of our minds.
The Anglican collect for Trinity Sunday:

Father, we praise you:
through your Word and Holy Spirit you created all things.
You reveal your salvation in all the world
by sending to us Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
Through your Holy Spirit
you give us a share in your life and love.
Fill us with the vision of your glory,
that we may always serve and praise you,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

In the Lutheran liturgy the prayer of the day is the following:

Almighty God our Father,
dwelling in majesty and mystery,
renewing and fulfilling creation by your eternal Spirit,
and revealing your glory through our Lord, Jesus Christ:
Cleanse us from doubt and fear,
and enable us to worship you,
with your Son and the Holy Spirit,
one God, living and reigning, now and forever.

1 Anglican liturgical texts are quoted from the Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church in Canada (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre 1983). Lutheran liturgical texts are quoted from Lutheran Book of Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg 1978).
Body and Blood of Christ

Until recently the texts of this feast focused on the Body of Christ with little attention paid to the Precious Blood. This is still reflected in our liturgical texts, though the scripture readings for cycle B tend to focus on the Precious Blood.

God's love in Christ: The texts for the solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Christ do not constitute a systematic theology of the eucharist or of the real presence of Christ. Using diverse scripture readings and other texts, the liturgy proclaims God's great love for us in this sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, Christ's invitation for us to share in his life through the eucharist, the significance of the eucharist in terms of service, peace, justice and love, and the presence of Christ in one another.

This feast, under the title Body of Christ (Corpus Christi), entered the liturgical calendar of the universal church in the year 1264.

Catholic Book of Worship II lists a number of appropriate songs under "Eucharistic devotions"; some but not all would be suitable for the eucharistic liturgy.

- Adore te devote 587
- Christians, let us love 572
- Down in adoration 582, 583
- Gift of finest wheat 570
- God is love 573, 574
- How blest are we 577
- I am the bread of life 569
- Let all mortal flesh keep 571
- O salutaris 586
- O saving victim 585
- Pange lingua 584
- Strong is God's love 428
- See us, Lord, about your altar 565
- Sing, my tongue 582, 583
- Tantum ergo 584
- The Lord Jesus 562
- Ubi caritas 575

Eucharist

Cycle A

In the gospel, from the sixth chapter of John's gospel, Jesus says, "I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he
shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.” The broader context contrasts this bread with the manna of the exodus.

The first reading tells us more specifically about God’s gift of manna: God “fed you with manna . . . in order to show you that not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord.”

The second reading tells us that in the eucharist we share both in the body and blood of Christ and in the church.

Cycle B

The Precious Blood: The readings of cycle B speak especially of the blood of Christ.

The gospel is Mark’s account of the last supper, at which Jesus said, “This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many.”

In the first reading, from the book of Exodus, we hear about a covenant sacrifice made by Moses. It concluded with the sprinkling of the blood on the people and the words, “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.”

The letter to the Hebrews speaks of the blood of Christ, who cleanses our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

Cycle C

The gospel presents one of the gospel stories of the multiplication of loaves and fishes. “They all ate until they had enough.”

The first reading tells of the mysterious priest-king Melchizedek, who “brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abram.”

Paul’s account of the last supper is recalled in the second reading. “Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.”

The opening prayer speaks of the eucharist as memorial and as sacrament; it leads us to experience salvation and peace.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you gave us the eucharist
as the memorial of your suffering and death.
May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood
help us to experience the salvation you won for us
and the peace of the kingdom . . . .

The alternative opening prayer links our undivided love of God with lives poured out in service of others.

Lord Jesus Christ,
we worship you living among us
in the sacrament of your body and blood.
May we offer to our Father in heaven
a solemn pledge of undivided love.
May we offer to our brothers and sisters
a life poured out in loving service of that kingdom
where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

In the prayer over the gifts the eucharist is seen to bring unity and peace.

Lord, may the bread and cup we offer
bring your Church the unity and peace they signify.

The prayer after communion speaks of the present—"even now we share your life"—and of the future: "may we possess this life completely in the kingdom".

Lord Jesus Christ,
you give us your body and blood in the eucharist
as a sign that even now we share your life.
May we come to possess it completely in the kingdom
where you live for ever and ever.

The first preface of the Holy Eucharist describes Christ as priest and victim
and tells us that participation in the eucharist helps us to grow in strength and
washes us clean.

He is the true and eternal priest
who established this unending sacrifice.
He offered himself as a victim for our deliverance
and taught us to make this offering in his memory.
As we eat his body which he gave for us,
we grow in strength.
As we drink his blood which he poured out for us,
we are washed clean.

The second preface speaks of Christ's intention in establishing the eucharist:
to bring us the saving power of his passion. It goes on to describe the fruits of
the eucharist: holiness, unity, becoming more like Christ.

At the last supper,
as he sat at table with his apostles,
he offered himself to you as the spotless lamb,
the acceptable gift that gives you perfect praise.
Christ has given us this memorial of his passion
to bring us its saving power until the end of time.

In this great sacrament you feed your people
and strengthen them in holiness,
so that the family of mankind
may come to walk in the light of one faith,
in one communion of love.
We come then to this wonderful sacrament
to be fed at your table
and grow into the likeness of the risen Christ.
In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

The Lord fed his people with the finest wheat and honey; their hunger was satisfied.

I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord; if anyone eats this bread he will live forever.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will live in me and I in him, says the Lord.

Liturgy of the Hours

Scripture readings: The reading at evening prayer 1 speaks of the sharing with Christ and each other that we experience when we participate in the eucharist. At morning prayer we read from the prophet Malachi: everywhere . . . a pure offering is offered to God's name. Part of Paul's account of the last supper is read at evening prayer 2.

The antiphons use numerous biblical images of food with which to sing about the eucharist.

The Lord is compassionate; he gives food to those who fear him, as a remembrance of his great deeds.

The Lord brings peace to his Church, and fills us with the finest wheat.

Truly I say to you: Moses did not give you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven, alleluia.

How kind and gentle you are, O Lord. You showed your goodness to your sons by giving them bread from heaven. You filled the hungry with good things, and the rich you sent away empty.

You fed your people with the food of angels; you gave them bread from heaven, alleluia.

Holy priests will offer incense and bread to God, alleluia.

I will give to the one who is victorious the hidden bread and a new name, alleluia.

I am the living bread come down from heaven; anyone who eats this bread will live for ever, alleluia.

Christ the Lord is a priest for ever in the line of Melchizedek; he offered up bread and wine.

I will take up the cup of salvation, and I will offer a sacrifice of praise.

You are the way, the truth and the life of the world, O Lord.
The antiphon for the canticle of Mary at evening prayer 2 is especially rich. It speaks of the past, the present, and the future.

How holy this feast in which Christ is our food; his passion is recalled; grace fills our hearts; and we receive a pledge of the glory to come, alleluia.

In the responsories we sing:

He gave them bread from heaven. Man has eaten the bread of angels.

You bring forth bread from the earth. And wine which gives warmth to men's hearts.

He gave them bread from heaven. Man has eaten the bread of angels.

The intercessions begin:

Christ invites all to the supper in which he gives his body and blood for the life of the world.

Brethren, let us pray to Jesus Christ, the bread of life.

The intercessions themselves proclaim the mystery of the eucharist:

Christ, Son of the living God, you commanded that this thanksgiving meal be done in memory of you

Christ, eternal priest of the Most High, you have commanded your priests to offer your sacraments

Christ, bread from heaven, you form one body out of all who partake of the one bread

Christ, through your bread you offer the remedy for immortality and the pledge of future resurrection,

Christ, our king who is to come, you commanded that the mysteries which proclaim your death be celebrated until you return

Priest of the new and eternal covenant, you offered perfect sacrifice to the Father on the altar of the cross

King of justice and peace, you consecrated bread and wine as the sign of your offering

True worshiper of the Father, your perfect offering is celebrated by the Church from the rising to the setting of the sun

Manna from heaven, you nourish the Church with your body and blood

Unseen host of our banquet, you stand at the door and knock.

Office of Readings

In the antiphons of the office of readings we sing:

Tell those who are invited: Behold, the meal is ready; come to the marriage feast.
If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink from the ever-flowing streams.

The Lord fed us with the finest wheat and filled us with honey from the rock.

The responsory quotes from Jesus’ discourse on the bread of life in the sixth chapter of John’s gospel.

I am the bread of life.
Your forefathers ate manna in the desert,
and they died.
This is the bread that comes down from heaven;
anyone who eats this bread will never die.
I am the living bread come down from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Sacred Heart

The heart of Jesus is a powerful symbol of God's love for us in Christ. It is also an affirmation of the full humanity of Jesus and an affirmation of the goodness of our humanity. The heart of Jesus is gentle and humble, full of love, caring, merciful, the source of blood and water poured out for us on the cross, seeking the lost. This love of Christ is poured into our hearts, calling for our response in kind.

The feast of the Sacred Heart entered the calendar of the universal church in the year 1856.

Catholic Book of Worship II lists songs for this solemnity under the heading, “Jesus Christ.” This list, however, is too long to print in full here.

Eucharist

Cycle A

The gospel tells us of the quality of Jesus' heart: “Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.”

The first reading is from Deuteronomy and speaks of God's love for his people: “It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you; . . . it was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity . . . .”

The second reading is from 1 John, and proclaims God's great love for us.

Cycle B

The gospel tells how the heart of Jesus on the cross was pierced by the lance of one of the solders, after which blood and water flowed out.

In the first reading, from the prophet Hosea, the great parental love of God for Israel is proclaimed.

In the second reading, from Ephesians, Paul proclaims “the breadth and length and height and depth” of Christ's love, and the experience this love “which surpasses all knowledge.”

Cycle C

The gospel tells the story of the lost sheep. “Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.”

In the first reading, from the prophet Ezekiel, God is likewise imaged as a shepherd. “I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered . . . .”
"I myself will pasture my sheep; the lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal."

In the second reading, Paul tells the Romans and us that “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Three opening prayers are provided. The first speaks of God's love for us in terms of the heart of Jesus.

Father, we rejoice in the gifts of love
we have received from the heart of Jesus your Son.
Open our hearts to share his life
and continue to bless us with his love.

The second opening prayer reminds us that we, despite God's great love, still are sinners.

Father, we have wounded the heart of Jesus your Son,
but he brings us forgiveness and grace.
Help us to prove our grateful love
and make amends for our sins.

The third opening prayer moves us to see Christ in all persons and to serve others in love.

Father, we honor the heart of your Son
broken by man's cruelty,
yet symbol of love's triumph,
pledge of all that man is called to be.
Teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch,
to offer him living worship
by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters.

The prayer after communion again asks God to help us recognize Christ in other persons.

Father, may this sacrament fill us with love.
Draw us closer to Christ your Son
and help us to recognize him in others.

The preface is a beautiful song of Christ's great love for us. It is also an invitation to us to respond to this love.

Lifted high on the cross,
Christ gave his life for us,
so much did he love us.
From his wounded side flowed blood and water,
the fountain of sacramental life in the Church.
To his open heart the Savior invites all men,
to draw water in joy from the springs of salvation.

In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

The thoughts of his heart last through every generation, that he will rescue them from death and feed them in time of famine.

Take my yoke upon you; learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.
The Lord says: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me; whoever believes in me, let him drink. Streams of living water shall flow out from within him.

One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a lance, and at once there flowed out blood and water.

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**Liturgy of the Hours**

**Scripture readings:** At evening prayer 1 we read that "Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy." The reading at morning prayer (Jeremiah 31:33) tells us that the law of God will be written on our hearts. God's love is also proclaimed in the reading at evening prayer 2: "God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: . . . he brought us to life with Christ."

The antiphons sing of God's love in Christ using a variety of images and biblical texts.

God has loved us with an everlasting love; therefore, when he was lifted up from the earth, in his mercy he drew us to his heart.

Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.

I am the Good Shepherd; I pasture my sheep and I lay down my life for them.

I have come to cast fire upon the earth; how I long to see the flame leap up.

Jesus stood and cried out: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

My son, give me your heart; note carefully the way I point out to you.

With tender compassion, our God has come to his people and set them free.

Lord, rule in the midst of your enemies with your gentle yoke.

The Lord is loving and merciful; he gives food to those who fear him.

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Lord has lifted us up and drawn us to his heart, for he has remembered his promise of mercy, alleluia.

**In the responsories we sing:**

Christ has loved us, and in his blood he has washed away our sins. He has made us a kingdom and priests to serve God our Father.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble of heart.
The intercessions begin:

Brethren, let us pray to the Lord Jesus, the refuge of our souls
Brethren, let us pray to the Lord Jesus, who is meek and humble of heart.

The intercessions themselves proclaim God's love in Jesus Christ:

Jesus, whose heart when pierced by a lance poured forth blood and water and gave birth to your spouse the Church
Jesus, holy temple of God, slain by men and raised up again by the Father
Jesus, King and center of all hearts, you love us and lead us to yourself with unending love and mercy
Jesus, our peace and reconciliation, you unite all in the peace of the new creation and put enmity to death through the cross
Jesus, our life and resurrection, you refresh the burdened and give rest to the weary
Jesus, because you loved us with so great a love, you were obedient even to death on the cross
Jesus, the fullness of divinity dwells in you
Jesus, in you are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
Jesus, the Father was well pleased in you
Jesus, of your fullness we have all received
Jesus, you are the source of life and holiness.

Office of Readings

In the antiphons of the office of readings we sing:

In you is the fountain of life; we drink from the streams of your goodness.
When my heart grew faint, you raised me up.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

The responsory is a song of praise for God's great love.

Praise the Lord, my soul,
and never forget all his benefits;
he saves your life from ruin
and crowns you with mercy and compassion.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
The image of king is not a powerful one for us today. Indeed, for some it is quite a negative image. The solemnity of Christ the King confronts and denies all secular, power-oriented views of kingship. It describes the kingship of Christ and the kingdom of God using a variety of images, all of which challenge our preconceived notions.

Christ is shepherd, cosmic lord, judge; and at the same time thirsty, a stranger, naked, ill, in prison; reconciler of humanity, conqueror of evil; a crucified king dedicated to the truth; descendant of the shepherd king David; creator and re-creator; head of the church; the one mocked on the cross, while comforting one crucified with him. He makes us a nation of priests.

The range of images proclaimed by the solemnity of Christ the King makes one think of Sylvia Dunstan’s song, Christus Paradox:

You, Lord, are both lamb and shepherd,
you, Lord, are both prince and slave,
you, peacemaker and sword-bringer
of the way you took and gave.
You, the everlasting instant,
you whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,
stripped of might upon the cross,
shining in eternal glory,
beggared by a soldier’s toss.
You, the everlasting instant,
you who are our gift and cost.

You who walk each day beside us,
sit in power at God’s side,
you who preach a way that’s narrow
have a love that reaches wide.
You, the everlasting instant,
you who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus,
worthy is our cosmic Christ,
worthy your defeat and vict’ry,
worthy still your peace and strife.
You, the everlasting instant,
you who are our death and life.

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Christ the King has been a feast of the universal church since the year 1925.

Catholic Book of Worship II suggests the following hymns:

- All glory, laud and honor 486
- Alleluia, give thanks 496
- Alleluia! Sing to Jesus 536
- At the name of Jesus 538
- Canticle of the gift 540
- Christ is alive 504
- Christ is the King 546
- Crown him with many crowns 549
- Forth in the peace of Christ 550
- Glory be to God the Father 528
- Great is the Lord 636
- Let all mortal flesh keep 571
- Let the earth rejoice 670
- O come and sing to God 74
- Praise, my soul, the King 650
- Ps 90: The Lord is King 422
- Ps 96: O sing a new song 423
- Ps 98: Sing a new song 424
- Rejoice! The Lord is King 645, 646
- The King of glory 546
- The Lamb's high banquet 564
- The Lord is King 647
- To Jesus Christ, our sovereign 548

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Eucharist

Cycle A

The gospel presents Matthew's view of the last judgment: Christ will divide the nations into two groups, as a shepherd divides sheep from goats. Those who served Christ in the hungry, etc. will be welcomed; those who failed to do so will be punished. The first reading, from Ezekiel, is closely related: God is the shepherd who tends the sheep, but will also judge them.

The second reading is an eschatological vision from the end of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. "Christ must reign until God has put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death." Finally, "he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father."

Cycle B

In the gospel reading, Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" and Jesus then explains that his kingdom does not belong to this world.

The first reading speaks of "one like a son of man" who "received dominion, glory, and kingship" from "the Ancient One." His sovereignty is eternal.
The reading from the book of Revelation names Jesus as the “ruler of the kings of earth,” who “has made us a royal nation of priests” to serve God.

Cycle C

The focus of the gospel is the title that was placed on the cross: “This is the king of the Jews.” On the one hand the soldiers mock him by saying, “If you are the king . . . save yourself.” On the other one of the thieves asks, “Jesus, remember me when you enter upon your reign.”

The first reading tells the story of the anointing of David, Jesus’ ancestor, as king of Israel.

Paul’s letter to the Colossians tells that God has brought us into the kingdom of Christ. He is the head of the church, the beginning, the first-born of the dead, absolute fullness.

The opening prayer tells us that Jesus Christ overcomes evil and makes all things new.

Almighty and merciful God,
you break the power of evil
and make all things new
in your Son Jesus Christ, the King of the universe.
May all in heaven and earth acclaim your glory
and never cease to praise you.

The alternative opening prayer asks God to open our hearts, free all nations and peoples, and bring all humanity together.

Father all-powerful, God of love,
you have raised our Lord Jesus Christ from death to life,
resplendent in glory as King of creation.
Open our hearts,
free all the world to rejoice in his peace,
to glory in his justice, to live in his love.
Bring all mankind together in Jesus Christ your Son,
whose kingdom is with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

The prayer over the gifts describes several effects of the eucharistic liturgy: reconciling humankind, unity, and peace.

we offer you the sacrifice
by which your Son reconciles mankind.
May it bring unity and peace to the world.

The prayer after communion images Christ both as king and as our food.

you give us Christ, the King of all creation,
as food for everlasting life.
Help us to live by his gospel
and bring us to the joy of his kingdom . . .

In the preface God’s kingdom is described in terms of truth, life, holiness, grace, justice, love and peace.
You anointed Jesus Christ, your only Son, 
with the oil of gladness,  
as the eternal priest and universal king.  
As priest he offered his life on the altar of the cross  
and redeemed the human race  
by this one perfect sacrifice of peace.  
As king he claims dominion over all creation,  
that he may present to you, his almighty Father,  
an eternal and universal kingdom:  
a kingdom of truth and life,  
a kingdom of holiness and grace,  
a kingdom of justice, love, and peace.

In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

- The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive strength and divinity, wisdom and power and honor: to him be glory and power for ever.

Blessed is he who inherits the kingdom of David, our father; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The Lord will reign for ever and will give his people the gift of peace.

Liturgyc of the Hours

Scripture readings: At evening prayer 1 the reading (Ephesians 1: 20-23) tells us that the risen Christ is “far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power or Domination.” He is “the ruler of everything.” At morning prayer (Ephesians 4: 15-16) we are told again that Christ is the head of the church. At evening prayer 2 we hear (1 Corinthians 15: 25-28) that “Christ must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

The antiphons offer a wide range of interpretations of Christ as king.

- We will call him the peacemaker, and his throne shall stand firm for ever.  
  His kingdom will endure for ever, and all the kings of the earth will serve and obey him.

- The authority and honor of a king has been given to Christ; all peoples, tribes and nations will serve him for ever.

- The Lord God will give him the throne of David, his ancestor; he will rule in the house of Jacob for ever and his kingdom will have no end, alleluia.

- A man will come whose name is the Dayspring; from his throne he will rule over all; he will speak of peace to the nations.

- They will sing his praises to the ends of the earth, and he will be their peace.

- The Lord will give him power and honor and kingship; all peoples, tribes and nations will serve him.
He fashioned us into a kingdom for the glory of his God and Father; he is the first born of the dead and the leader of all the kings of the earth, alleluia.

He shall sit upon the throne of David and rule over his kingdom for ever.

Your kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and you shall rule from generation to generation.

On his cloak and on his thigh a name was written: King of kings, and Lord of lords, To him be glory and power for ever.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, says the Lord.

In the responsories we sing:

Yours is the splendor and the power; yours is the kingdom, O Lord. You will rule over all.

Your saints, O Lord, will tell of the glory of your kingdom. They will proclaim your power.

Your throne, O God, shall stand for ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice.

The intercessions begin:

Let us pray to Christ the King. He is the firstborn of all creation; all things exist in him.

The intercessions themselves describe the kingship of Christ in many ways.

Christ, our king and shepherd, gather your sheep from every land

Christ, our leader and savior

Judge of all ages

Prince of peace

Christ, heir of all nations

Christ, firstborn of the dead and firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death

Christ, you are our savior and our God, our shepherd and our king

Good Shepherd, you laid down your life for your sheep

Christ, our redeemer, you have been made king over all the earth

King of all creation, you came into the world to bear witness to the truth

Christ, our model and master, you have brought us into your kingdom.

Office of Readings

In the antiphons of the office of readings we sing:

I have been made king upon Zion, his holy mountain, to proclaim his teaching.
All the kings of the earth will worship him; all nations will serve him.
All the tribes of the earth will be blessed in him; all nations will glory in him.

The responsory speaks of the second coming of Christ as king.

They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty; then he will send out the angels, and he will gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the farthest bounds of heaven. He will judge the world with justice and the peoples with truth.

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Anglican and Lutheran Liturgies

The Anglican liturgical calendar refers to this feast as The Reign of God, while the Lutheran calendar uses Christ the King. Their collects are similar; this is the Lutheran version:

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things to your beloved Son, whom you anointed priest forever and king of all creation: Grant that all the people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of your Son . . . .
Presentation of the Lord

The feast of the Presentation of the Lord, so far as its content is concerted, is an extension of the Christmas Season. Because the biblical event that it commemorates took place forty days after the birth of Christ, this feast is actually celebrated several weeks following the beginning of ordinary time. It continues the celebration of the incarnation of Christ as one fully human, his revelation to the world, his welcome by pious women and men, his Jewishness, and his presence with us. Christ as light and as king are prominent themes. As with Christmas itself, we not only look back to the historical life of the infant Jesus, but also to the presence with us today of Christ in the Spirit, and to his second coming.

The temple of Jerusalem, the setting of the Presentation, is associated with the presence of God, with the offering of sacrifice and hence with priesthood, with prayer and praise, and with revelation. In several liturgical texts it is imaged as the wedding chamber of Zion, prepared to receive Christ. We respond with joy.

The Presentation entered the liturgical calendar during the fourth – fifth centuries. For some time prior to 1969 this feast was called the “Purification of Mary”; however it really is a feast of Christ. In the Eastern churches it is called the “Feast of Meeting,” commemorating the encounter of Jesus with Simeon and Anna.

Candlemas: The feast of the Presentation is distinguished by a solemn blessing of candles and procession in addition to the mass and office. This part of the liturgy gave rise to the name, “Candlemas” – that is, Candle Mass.

Blessing of Candles and Procession

Candles are blessed using one of the following prayers.

God our Father, source of all light,
today you revealed to Simeon
your Light of revelation to the nations.
Bless these candles and make them holy.
May we who carry them to praise your glory
walk in the path of goodness
and come to the light that shines for ever.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

God our Father, source of eternal light,
fill the hearts of all believers
with the light of faith.
May we who carry these candles in your church
come with joy to the light of glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
The gospel is the familiar story of the meeting of the infant Jesus and his parents with Simeon and Anna in the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus is brought by his parents to the temple according to the prescriptions of the Law. Simeon, who is described as being inspired by the Holy Spirit, takes Jesus in his arms and blesses him in the words of the canticle: "Now you can dismiss your servant in peace." He goes on to bless Jesus' parents and speak words of prophecy to Mary. Anna, an elderly and pious prophetess, also gives thanks to God upon seeing Jesus and speaks of the child to other pious people. The family returns to Nazareth and Jesus grows up there.

The first reading, from the prophet Malachi, includes passages such as "suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord one you seek," "yes he is coming," and "who can endure the day of his coming."

The psalm refers to the coming of the king into Jerusalem: "Who is this king of glory? It is the Lord!"

The second reading, from Hebrews, emphasizes the humanity of Jesus: Jesus had a full share in blood and flesh; he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way.

The opening prayer refers to the incarnation and its significance for us.

All-powerful Father,
Christ your Son became man for us
and was presented in the temple.
May he free our hearts from sin
and bring us into your presence.

The prayer after communion speaks of the welcome given Christ by Simeon. It then refers to the welcome we will be invited to give Christ at our death and at the second coming.

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon,
who did not die
until he had been privileged to welcome the Messiah.
May this communion perfect your grace in us
and prepare us to meet Christ
when he comes to bring us into everlasting life,
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

The preface views the Presentation as a revelation of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Today your Son,
who shares your eternal splendor,
was presented in the temple,
and revealed by the Spirit
as the glory of Israel
and the light of all peoples.
Our hearts are joyful,
for we have seen your salvation . . . .
In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

Within your temple, God, we ponder your loving kindness. Your praise, like your name, O God, reaches to the ends of the earth, your right hand is filled with justice.

This is the light of revelation to the nations, and the glory of your people, Israel.

With my own eyes I have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all the nations.

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Liturgies of the Hours

At morning prayer the reading is from the same part of Malachi read at the eucharist: “the Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple.”

At evening prayer 1 Hebrews 10: 5-7 is read. It refers first to the incarnation: “You . . . prepared a body for me,” and then to Christ’s obedience: “God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.” At evening prayer 2 Hebrews 4: 15-16 again speaks of Jesus’ humanity: we have a high priest who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin.

The antiphons for the psalms and canticles have several themes. Some refer to the parents of Jesus:

The parents of Jesus brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

As the law prescribed, they offered to the Lord a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

Others refer just to Simeon:

Blessed are you, good Simeon; you held in your arms Christ the Lord, the Savior of his people.

Simeon was a holy and devout man who looked for the redemption of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was with him.

Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God. He is a light to reveal you to the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord.

Some refer to Simeon and Jesus’ parents together:

The old man carried the child, but the child was the old man’s Lord. The Virgin gave birth to the child yet remained a virgin for ever. She knelt in worship before her child.

Today the Blessed Virgin Mary presented the Child Jesus in the temple; and Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, took him in his arms, and gave thanks to God.
When the parents of Jesus brought him into the temple, Simeon took him in his arms and gave thanks to God.

Two additional antiphons sing:

My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people.

Zion, prepare your wedding chamber to receive Christ the King.

In the responsories we sing:

The Lord has made known his saving power. Which he has prepared in the sight of every people.

Worship the Lord in his holy court. Bring him your homage and praise.

The introduction to the intercessions says:

Today our Savior was presented in the temple.

In the intercessions themselves we speak of Christ using a number of rich images:

Christ Jesus, you are the light that enlightens all nations
You are the redeemer and the glory of your people Israel
Jesus, desire of the nations
Christ Jesus, joy of all the saints
Jesus, comforter of Israel
Lord Jesus, cornerstone of God’s kingdom.

Office of Readings

The antiphons of the office of readings sing of Christ and of Jerusalem:

This child is destined for the fall and for the rising of many.

Arise and shine, Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.

Rejoice and exult, new city of Zion. See how humbly your King comes to save you.

In the responsory we sing of Mary as well as of Simeon:

Zion, let your wedding chamber be prepared to receive Christ your King.
The Virgin conceived and gave birth to a son, yet she remained a virgin for ever.
She knelt in worship before her child.
Simeon took the child in his arms and gave praise and thanks to God.
The Eastern Tradition

One prayer from the Eastern liturgy’s feast of The Meeting of the Lord or of The Purification of the Holy Birth-Giver of God is as follows:

Let us also come: with hymns divine let us meet Christ and receive him whose salvation Simeon beheld. For this is he of whom David prophesied: This is he who spoke by the prophets; who for our sakes became incarnate, and proclaimed the law. Him let us worship.

Today let the door of heaven be opened: for the Father’s Word, which is from everlasting, having taken his beginning in time from a Virgin, without renouncing his Godhead, is of her own free will brought by his mother, as a babe of forty days, into the temple under the law: and an aged man receiveth him in his arms, crying: Let thy servant depart, O Lord; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which is come into the world to save the race of men.

Anglican and Lutheran Liturgies

The Anglican Church uses the following collect or opening prayer; that used by the Lutheran Church is quite similar.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have sent us your salvation; inspire us by your Holy Spirit to recognize him who is the glory of Israel and the light for all nations, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings: The Anglican Church of Canada uses the same scripture texts as does the Roman Catholic Church. In Lutheran Book of Worship the second and third readings are the same, but 1 Samuel 1:21-28 is used as the first lesson.

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1 Eastern liturgical texts, here and below, are quoted from Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, trans. Isabel Florence Hapgood, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: Syrian-Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and All North America 1922, reprinted 1965).
Annunciation of the Lord

The feast of the Annunciation celebrates the conception of Jesus in Mary through the Holy Spirit, the first moment of his incarnation. The angel Gabriel reveals that God has chosen Mary to bear Jesus, the Son of the Most High, and Mary accepts this mysterious ministry: “I am the servant of the Lord.”

Response to God: While the gospel shows us Mary responding to God by saying, “I will do your will,” the second reading proclaims that this is Christ’s response to God as well: “I have come to do your will.” Theologically, Jesus sets the example for Mary. From the point of view of human chronology, Mary sets the example for Jesus. Both, in fact, are examples for us, for this solemnity calls us to respond to God with fidelity.

The church has celebrated the Annunciation from at least the fifth century.

Catholic Book of Worship II lists songs for this solemnity under the heading, “Mary”.

Eucharist

The gospel tells of the mission of the angel Gabriel to the virgin, Mary. “Rejoice, O highly favored daughter! You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. The Holy Spirit will come upon you; hence, the holy offspring to be born will be called Son of God. Let it be done to me as you say.”

The first reading is Isaiah 7: 10-14, which prophesies, “the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.”

The psalm refers more to the second reading and gospel more than to the first reading: “Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.”

The second reading is Hebrews 10: 4-10. It refers to Christ’s incarnation, but the emphasis is on Christ’s willingness to carry out his mission. The words, “I have come to do your will” echo Mary’s words at the end of the gospel reading.

The opening prayer names the Lord as Word, Jesus Christ, redeemer, divine and human.

God our Father,  
your Word became man and was born of the Virgin Mary.  
May we become more like Jesus Christ,  
whom we acknowledge as our redeemer, God and man.
In the alternative opening prayer we speak of Mary and of her continuing role in bringing Jesus to all.

Almighty Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
you have revealed the beauty of your power
by exalting the lowly virgin of Nazareth
and making her the mother of our Savior.
May the prayers of this woman
bring Jesus to the waiting world
and fill the void of incompleteness
with the presence of her child . . . .

The prayer over the gifts refers to the Annunciation as the beginning of the church:

Almighty Father,
as we recall the beginning of the Church
when your Son became man,
may we celebrate with joy today
this sacrament of your love.

The prayer after communion describes our responses to Christ as faith, hope and joy.

Lord, may the sacrament we share
strengthen our faith and hope in Jesus,
born of a virgin
and truly God and man.
By the power of his resurrection
may we come to eternal joy.

The preface is very rich:

He came to save mankind by becoming a man himself.
The Virgin Mary, receiving the angel's message in faith,
conceived by the power of the Spirit
and bore your Son in purest love.
In Christ, the eternal truth,
your promise to Israel came true.
In Christ, the hope of all peoples,
man's hope was realized beyond all expectation.
Through Christ the angels of heaven
offer their prayer of adoration
as they rejoice in your presence for ever.

The antiphons and acclamations at the eucharist quote scripture:

As Christ came into the world, he said: Behold! I have come to do your will, O God. (Hebrews)
The Word of God became man and lived among us; and we saw his glory. (John)
The Virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel. (Isaiah)
Scripture readings: At evening prayer we read 1 John 1: 1-2: the Word, who is life, was with God and has been made visible to us. At morning prayer Philippians 2: 6-7 is read: Christ emptied himself to become fully human.

Most of the antiphons of evening and morning prayer retell the gospel story:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, Mary, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary, who was engaged to be married to Joseph.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

Trusting in the Lord's promise, the Virgin Mary conceived a child, and remaining a virgin, she gave birth to the Savior.

The angel of the Lord brought God's message to Mary. And she conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. Behold you shall conceive and bear a son, and he will be called the Son of the Most High.

I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you have said.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary in greeting: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women.

Other antiphons speak of Christ and his incarnation:

A shoot will spring forth from the stock of Jesse, and a flower will blossom from his root. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him.

The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign for ever.

The eternal Word, born of the Father before time began, today emptied himself for our sake and became man.

In his great love for us, God sent his Son in the likeness of our sinful nature.

In the responsories we sing:

A flower has sprung from Jesse's stock and a star has risen from Jacob. The Virgin has given birth to the Savior.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

The Word was made man and he lived among us. He was in the beginning with God.
The intercessions begin:

On this day the eternal Father sent his angel to bring Mary the good news of our salvation.

Today we celebrate the beginning of our salvation when the coming of the Lord was announced by the angel.

The intercessions themselves retell the story and provide some additional images of Mary:

You chose the Virgin Mary as the mother of your Son
You sent Gabriel to give Mary your message of peace and joy
Mary gave her consent, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, and your Word came to dwell among us
Mary received God's word with joy
Mary, the new Eve, was obedient to your word.

Office of Readings

In the antiphons of the office of readings we sing:

In the fullness of time, God sent his Son, born of a woman, that we might become his adopted children.

When he came into this world, he said: You have prepared a body for me; behold I come to do your will, O God.

In this we have come to know God's love for us; he has sent his only Son, that we might live through him.

The responsory retells the gospel story:

The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary who was betrothed to Joseph.
The light filled her with fear, but the angel said to her:
Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
Behold you shall conceive and bear a son, and he will be called the Son of the Most High.
Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

The Eastern Tradition

One prayer from the Eastern celebration of The Annunciation of the Most Holy Virgin is the following:

Gabriel, when he revealed unto thee, O Maiden, the counsel of God which was from everlasting, did stand before thee, saluting thee, and
proclaiming: Hail, O Earth Unsown! Hail, O Bush which Burned, yet was not consumed! Hail, O Abyss Unfathomable! Hail, O Bridge which leadeth unto heaven, and Ladder lofty, which Jacob saw! Hail, O Vessel Divine of Manna! Hail, O Abrogation of the curse! Hail, O Recall of Adam! The Lord is with thee.

Anglican and Lutheran Liturgies

Similar collects or opening prayers are used in both Anglican and Lutheran liturgies; the following is the Lutheran text:

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we, who have known the incarnation of your Son, Jesus Christ, announced by an angel, may by his cross and Passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection . . . .

The scripture readings used in the Anglican liturgy are the same as those used by the Roman Catholic Church. The first and third readings of the Lutheran liturgy are the same, but for the second reading they use 1 Timothy 3: 16.
Transfiguration of the Lord

The feast of the Transfiguration and that of the Triumph of the Cross are related, though this is more evident in the Eastern liturgies than in our own. Both feasts are more important celebrations in the Eastern churches than in the West and came into the liturgical calendars of the East several centuries before they appeared in the West.

In the synoptic gospels three scenes follow one after the other: (a) Peter's confession of faith and of Jesus' true identity at Caesarea Philippi, (b) Jesus' prediction of his passion and invitation to take up the cross, and (c) the transfiguration. The transfiguration in a sense confirms the proclamation at Caesarea Philippi and reveals the glorification that will follow Christ's passion; it provides hope and promise for we who embrace the cross.

An ancient tradition has it that in the life of Jesus the Transfiguration occurred forty days before Good Friday. At any rate, we celebrate the transfiguration close to the beginning of Lent. Following a tradition of southern Europe, Roman Catholics use the gospel of the transfiguration on the second Sunday of Lent. Following a northern tradition, Lutherans celebrate this event on the Sunday prior to Ash Wednesday.

At the end of the summer the Transfiguration and the Mystery of the Cross are again celebrated forty days apart: 6 August and 14 September. Both feasts celebrate the lifting up of Christ, his divinity as well as his humanity, and our association with him in the life of grace and life of glory.

In cycles A and B of the liturgical calendar the gospel readings concerning Caesarea Philippi and the prediction of the passion and invitation to take up the cross occur either between the Transfiguration and the Triumph of the Cross or immediately following the latter. In cycle B these are found in a single reading for the 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time, which falls between 11 and 17 September. In cycle A they are divided into two readings, proclaimed on the 21st and 22nd Sundays of Ordinary Time; these fall between 21 August and 3 September.

Eucharist

The gospel: Though the first and second readings are the same each year, the three different versions of the Transfiguration (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are read in the three cycles of the liturgical calendar. Jesus' face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus, Peter wanted to make three dwellings, a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice spoke from the cloud.

The description of the Transfiguration itself varies slightly among the three gospels:
Mark: And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

Matthew: And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

Luke: And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.

The proclamation from the cloud resembles that of the voice at Jesus' baptism, but is unique in concluding, "Listen to him." In addition, Luke's gospel calls Jesus "my Chosen" instead of "My Beloved."

Mark: This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him.

Matthew: This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him.

Luke: This is my son, the Chosen; listen to him.

Luke's gospel (9: 31) also refers to Christ's death, described here as departure or exodus.

The first reading is from the book of Daniel. It speaks of the Ancient One whose clothing was snow bright, of the one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, and of his receiving dominion, glory and kingship.

The second reading, 2 Peter 1: 16-19, refers to Peter's being an eyewitness of the transfiguration. Jesus "received glory and praise" from God in the words, "This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests."

The opening prayer speaks of the significance of the Transfiguration for us:

God our Father,
   in the transfigured glory of Christ your Son,
   you strengthen our faith
   by confirming the witness of your prophets,
   and show us the splendor of your beloved sons and daughters.
   As we listen to the voice of your Son,
   help us to become heirs to eternal life with him . . . .

The preface refers to the future glory of the church:

   He revealed his glory to the disciples
   to strengthen them for the scandal of the cross.
   His glory shone from a body like our own,
   to show that the Church,
   which is the body of Christ,
   would one day share his glory.

In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

   In the shining cloud the Spirit is seen; from it the voice of the Father is heard: This is my Son, my beloved, in whom is all my delight. Listen to him.

   This is my Son, my beloved, in whom is all my delight: listen to him.

   When Christ is revealed we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
The readings of the liturgy of the hours are very rich. Philippians 3: 20-21 (evening prayer 1) says, “from heaven comes the Savior we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body.” At morning prayer we read Revelation 21: 10, 23: the new Jerusalem does not need the sun or the moon for light, since it was lit by the radiant glory of God and the Lamb was a lighted torch for it. Romans 8: 16-17 has been chosen for evening prayer 2: we are heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

Most of the antiphons for morning and evening prayer retell the gospel story.

Jesus took his disciples and went up the mountain where he was transfigured before them.

Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared before them and began talking with Jesus.

Lord, how good it is for us to be here; if you wish, let us build three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.

Today the Lord Jesus Christ shone with splendor on the mountain, his face like the sun and his clothes white as snow.

Today the Lord was transfigured and the voice of the Father bore witness to him; Moses and Elijah appeared with him in glory and spoke with him about the death he was to undergo.

The law was given through Moses and prophecy through Elijah. Radiant in the divine majesty, they were seen speaking with the Lord.

A voice spoke from the cloud: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone, and he was transfigured before them.

A bright cloud overshadowed them and suddenly a voice spoke from the cloud: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus commanded them: Tell no one of the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

When they heard the voice from the cloud, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear; Jesus came up to them, touched them and said: Stand up. Do not be afraid.

The antiphon for the canticle of Mary at evening prayer 1 is an acclamation addressed to Christ:

Christ Jesus, you are the splendor of the Father and the perfect image of his being; you sustain all creation with your powerful word and cleanse us of all our sins. On this day you were exalted in glory upon the high mountain.
In the responsories we sing:

You have appeared in glory before the Lord. The Lord has clothed you in splendor.

With glory and honor, Lord, you have crowned him. You set him over the works of your hands.

Beauty and wealth surround him. Richness and splendor adore his holy place.

The intercessions begin:

In the presence of his disciples our Savior was wonderfully transfigured on Mount Tabor.

Most of the intercessions retell the gospel story. In addition, they proclaim:

O Christ, you gave light to the world when the glory of the Creator arose over you
O Christ, you will reform our lowly body and make it like your glorious one
O God, you have filled your chosen people with the bounty of your house
O God, you have scattered the darkness with your light and have poured your light into our hearts so that we might look upon the radiant face of Jesus Christ
O God, according to your plan, you have called us to holiness by your grace which you have revealed in Jesus Christ.

Office of Readings

In the antiphons of the office of readings we sing:

One day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

Light dawns for the just, and joy for the upright of heart.

Praise the Lord, our God; worship him on his holy mountain.

The responsory relates the Transfiguration to Christ's second coming:

See how great is the love
the Father has given us;
we are called God's children,
and that is what we are.
We know that when he appears,
we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he really is.

The Eastern Tradition

One text from the Eastern Church's feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord is as follows:

Before thy Crucifixion, O Christ, the Mount became like unto the heavens, and a cloud was outspread like a canopy, while thou wast transfigu-
ured, and while the Father bore witness unto thee. There was Peter, together with James and John, inasmuch as they desired to be with thee at the time of thy betrayal also; that, having beheld thy marvells, they might not be affrighted at thy sufferings. Make us also worthy to adore the same in peace; for the sake of thy great mercy.

The mountain that of old was gloomy and smoking is now honorable and holy, for thereon thy feet have stood, O Lord; for the mystery which was hidden from eternity, even thy dread Transfiguration, was made manifest in these last days unto Peter and John and James, who, unable to endure such splendor of thy countenance and radiance of thy garments, fell with their faces to the earth, and covered themselves: and overcome with dread, they were amazed when they beheld Moses and Elijah talking with thee, concerning those things which should happen unto thee. And a voice also from the Father, bore witness unto thee, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him, who also giveth unto the world great mercy.

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**Anglican and Lutheran Liturgies**

**The Anglican collect** is:

Almighty God,  
on the holy mount you revealed to chosen witnesses  
your well-beloved Son, wonderfully transfigured:  
mercifully deliver us from the darkness of this world,  
and change us into his likeness from glory to glory . . . .

**The Lutherans** do not celebrate the Transfiguration on 6 August, but use the following collects on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany:

Almighty God, on the mountain you showed your glory in the transfiguration of your Son. Give us the vision to see beyond the turmoil of our world and to behold the king in all his glory . . . .

O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us with the king heirs of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness . . . .
Triumph of the Cross

The feast of the Triumph (formerly Exaltation) of the Cross is a great celebration of the life-giving nature of the death and resurrection of Christ. It proclaims the significance of the cross for our salvation and expresses the Johannine perspective that Jesus' crucifixion was also his exaltation.

The church in the West has celebrated a feast of the Holy Cross since the seventh century. The Eastern church had such a feast several centuries earlier.

Eucharist

The gospel reading is from Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus, toward the beginning of John's gospel. The reference to the cross is allusive rather than a description of the passion: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

God's great love: The second main note is that Christ was sent from God: "God . . . gave his only Son;" God sent the Son. The motive for all this was that "God so loved the world;" Christ was not sent "to condemn the world." The purpose is "that all who believe may have eternal life in him," "that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life," and "that the world might be saved through him."

The first reading, from the book of Numbers, tells the story about the serpent to which John's gospel refers. In the desert during the exodus, the people complained and in punishment for their lack of trust God sent serpents, whose bite was deadly. The people then repented, Moses prayed to God for them, and he was told to raise up a bronze serpent on a pole. This had salvific power, for persons bitten by serpents would recover if they looked upon this representation of a serpent.

The psalm refers to this incident and the refrain reminds us, "Do not forget the works of the Lord."

The second reading is from the great christological hymn of the second chapter of Philippians. Christ, though divine, became fully human and obediently accepted death, even death on a cross. Therefore he was exalted and given the name that every tongue proclaims, Jesus Christ is Lord. This reading is also used on Good Friday.

The opening prayer speaks of the cross in the past, the present, and the future:

God our Father,  
in obedience to you  
your only Son accepted death on the cross  
for the salvation of mankind.  
We acknowledge the mystery of the cross on earth.  
May we receive the gift of redemption in heaven.
The prayer after communion connects the cross with the eucharist.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the holy bread of life.
Bring to the glory of the resurrection
the people you have redeemed by the wood of the cross.

The preface contrasts the tree from which Adam and Eve ate with the saving tree of Christ's cross.

You decreed that man should be saved through
the wood of the cross.
The tree of man's defeat became his tree of victory;
where life was lost, there life has been restored
through Christ our Lord.

In the antiphons and acclamations of the eucharist we sing:

We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection; through him we are saved and made free.

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you; because by your cross you have redeemed the world.

When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself, says the Lord.

Liturgic of the Hours

For evening prayer 1 and 2 the reading is from 1 Corinthians 1: 23-24: we preach a crucified Christ, a Christ who is the power and wisdom of God.

For morning prayer we read Hebrews 2: 9-10. Jesus is "one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendor because he submitted to death."

The antiphons for morning and evening prayer present a range of interpretations and responses to the mystery of the cross.

Our crucified and risen Lord has redeemed us, alleluia.
The tree of life flourished in the midst of the holy city of Jerusalem, and its leaves had power to save all the nations, alleluia.

We must glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was ordained that Christ should suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead.

To destroy the power of hell Christ died upon the cross; clothed in strength and glory, he triumphed over death.

The Lord hung upon the cross to wash away our sins in his own blood. How splendid is that blessed cross.
How radiant is that precious cross which brought us our salvation. In the cross we are victorious, through the cross we shall reign, by the cross all evil is destroyed, alleluia.

We worship your cross, O Lord, and we praise and glorify your holy resurrection, for the wood of the cross has brought joy to the world.

What a great work of charity! Death itself died when life was slain on the tree.

We worship your cross, O Lord, and we commemorate your glorious passion. You suffered for us; have mercy on us.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

O cross, you are the glorious sign of our victory. Through your power may we share in the triumph of Christ Jesus.

**In the responsories we sing:**

This sign will appear in the heavens when the Lord comes. Lift up your heads, your salvation is at hand.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

O glorious cross, on you the King of angels was victorious. And he has washed away our sins in his own blood.

**The intercessions begin:**

Let us pray with confidence to Christ who endured the cross to save us:

**The intercessions themselves** sing of Christ:

O Christ, you emptied yourself, taking the form of a servant and being made like us

O Christ, you humbled yourself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross

O Christ, you were raised up by the Father and given the name that is above all other names

O Christ, at your name every knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth will bend in adoration

O Christ, every tongue shall confess that you are Lord to the glory of God the Father

Son of God, you healed the people of Israel when they looked upon the bronze serpent

Son of Man, just as Moses raised up the serpent in the desert, so you were lifted up on the cross in the sight of all the nations

Only-begotten Son of the Father, you were sent into the world so that those who believe in you might not perish
Beloved Son of the Father, you were not sent to judge the world but to save it,

Eternal Son of the Father, you came to cast fire on the earth and you longed to see its flame kindled in the hearts of all men.

Office of Readings

The antiphons of the office of readings proclaim:

See the cross of the Lord; let all his enemies flee in terror; the lion of Judah, David's seed, is victorious, alleluia.

The holy name of the Lord has been raised up on the cross above heaven and earth, alleluia.

O blessed cross, you alone were found worthy to bear the Lord and King of heaven, alleluia.

The responsory tells of the significance of the cross for us:

We must glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; in him is our salvation, life and resurrection. Through him we are saved and set free. Because he suffered death, he is crowned with glory and honor.

The Eastern Tradition

One text from the Eastern feast of The Elevation of the Precious Cross of the Lord is as follows:

The Cross being set up, doth command every created being to sing the most pure Passion of him who was lifted up thereon. For having upon the same slain him who had slain us, he endowed with life those who were slain, and adorned them, and vouchsafed that they might dwell in heaven, foreasmuch as he is compassion, through the rich abundance of his goodness. Wherefore, rejoicing, let us exalt his Name, and magnify his exceeding condescension.

O come, all ye nations, let us adore the blessed Tree, through which the righteousness eternal hath come to pass: for he who beguiled our forefather Adam with the tree is himself beguiled by the Cross, and he who, like a tyrant, did lord it over that which the King had fashioned, falleth, being overthrown by a marvellous downfall. The poison of the serpent is washed away by the blood of God, and the curse of just condemnation is abolished, in that the Righteous One hath been condemned by unrighteous judgment: for it was meet that the tree should be healed by the Tree, and that by the passion of the Passionless One upon the Tree, the passions of the condemned one should be destroyed. But glory, O Christ our King, unto thy wise providence to us, whereby thou hast saved all men, foreasmuch as thou art good and lovest mankind.
Anglican and Lutheran Liturgies

Opening prayer: These churches use essentially the same collect; this is the Anglican text:

    Almighty God,
    whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
    was lifted high upon the cross
    that he might draw the whole world to himself;
    may we who rejoice in the mystery of our redemption,
    have grace to take up our cross and follow him . . . .

Scripture readings: The Anglican liturgy uses the same first and third readings as does the Roman Catholic liturgy; the second reading is 1 Corinthians 1: 18-24. All three readings of the Lutheran liturgy are different: Isaiah 45: 21-25; 1 Corinthians 1: 18-24; and John 12: 20-33.

Our Next Issue

After a number of years of preparation, the new Canadian Catholic hymnal, Catholic Book of Worship III, will be published in 1992. The next issue of the Bulletin will be devoted entirely to our new hymnal.
The following is an excerpt from a recent progress report on the revision of the Roman Missal (Sacramentary), which is now being carried out by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

The response received by ICEL to the consultation in 1986 on the Order of Mass included a number of observations on pastoral issues related to the celebration of Mass. Among the issues raised, the introductory rites drew the greatest amount of comment. Those who remarked on the introductory rites commented in general on their complexity, the confusion of purpose and moods of the various elements, the seeming predominance of the penitential aspect, and the historical novelty of the introductory rites as arranged at present. Many of these respondents made a plea for the clarification and simplification of the introductory rites. Some thought that this could be achieved by making these rites into several independent elements that could be selected according to the occasion or season.

The following scheme offers one way in which this problem could be addressed. The conferences of bishops may wish to comment on the proposed scheme and to indicate to ICEL whether this scheme should be incorporated into the revised Missal when it is presented to them for their consideration and vote.

The following are proposed alternatives to be used after the entrance procession, greeting and opening rite and before the opening prayer:

I. **Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**
   - Invitation to prayer
   - Blessing of water
   - (Blessing of salt)
   - Sprinkling (with song)

II. **Penitential Rite**
   - Invitation to repentance
   - Confession of sin (Form A or Form B)
   - Absolution

III. **Litany of Prayer**
   - Invitation
   - Invocations to Christ (Form C)

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IV. Kyrie  
Invitation  
Kyrie (Sung)  

V. Gloria  
Invitation  
Gloria (sung)  

VI. Other Opening Rites  
Baptism  
Passion Sunday  
Liturgy of the Hours  
Etc.

This scheme for the introductory rites is based on and slightly develops the Order of Mass in the Missale Romanum and in the approved editions of the Missal used by other language groups, notably the German, French, and Italian editions. According to this scheme, the preparation for Mass would include a choice to be made between several alternative "opening rites" that occur between the greeting and the opening prayer. Of these opening rites, the first three and the last are very similar to what is provided at present in the Order of Mass. According to the present rubrics, the penitential rite and Kyrie are omitted when the blessing and sprinkling of holy water takes place (Opening Rite I). And when the penitential rite is celebrated, the Kyrie is used after Form A but omitted if Form B or C of the penitential rite is used (Opening Rites II and III). In either case, during Advent and Lent the Gloria is not used. The present rubrics also indicate that when other rites are combined with Mass and used as part of the introductory rites (for example, the liturgy of the hours, baptism, Passion Sunday), the penitential rite is omitted and the Kyrie may be omitted (Opening Rite VI).

The preceding scheme for the introductory rites would serve, by way of a clearer arrangement of elements to make more evident the choices already present in the rubrics. It would also develop somewhat the present rubrics: by making the penitential rite optional even in those instances when another rite, for example, the blessing and sprinkling or the liturgy of the hours, does not take place; by making the Kyrie and Gloria freestanding alternatives to the other ritual elements of the introductory rites rather than texts to be used in combination with some of them.

Similar development with regard to the penitential rite, Kyrie, and Gloria is evident in the Missals of the other language groups, particularly the German Messbuch (1975). In the Messbuch there is provision for the omission of the penitential rite in certain circumstances: a hymn of repentance may replace Forms A and B of the penitential rite; the general confession may be omitted when a particularly festive element of the celebration occurs close to it; and the prayer of absolution may be omitted when the opening prayer includes a similar petition. The Messbuch allows for the Kyrie to serve as an opening song, especially when it is arranged as a litany or linked to an opening song. And in place of the Gloria an alternative hymn of praise may be used.
Invitation to the Lord’s Prayer

Immediately following the Great Amen of the eucharistic prayer the rubric reads, "The priest sets down the chalice and paten and with hands joined, sings or says these or similar words." The words that are referred to are the presider’s invitation to the entire assembly to join in the Lord’s Prayer. Four alternative invitations to the Lord’s Prayer then follow:

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:
Jesus taught us to call God our Father,
and so we have the courage to say:
Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins
and to bring us to forgive those who sin against us.
Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom
as Jesus taught us.

Because the rubric includes the phrase, “in these or similar words,” the four texts actually printed in the Sacramentary are not the only four possible invitations. Rather, they are models, and the presider or liturgy planning group may compose some other, but similar invitation, if it seems appropriate to do so and if they can do this well.

In the various liturgical books of the church a large number of invitations to the Lord’s Prayer are offered as models. These officially composed and approved model texts provide a wealth of resources as well as a good deal of help in composing alternative texts, when this seems appropriate.

The model invitations offered in the Sacramentary for the eucharistic liturgy are often also used in other rites. In addition, however, other liturgical books offer a number of other texts. A selection of these novel texts are given below.

Liturgy of the Hours:

Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:
Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:
With longing for the coming of God’s kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father:
Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us offer the prayer Christ himself taught us:
Let us make our prayers and praise complete by offering the Lord’s prayer:
Let us conclude our prayers with the Lord’s prayer:
Let us again offer our praise to God and pray in the words of Christ:
Remember us, Lord [this invitation is addressed to Christ], when you come to your kingdom and teach us how to pray:
And now let us pray with confidence as Christ our Lord asked:
And now let us pray as the Lord told us:
We pattern our prayer on the prayer of Christ our Lord, and say:
Now let us offer the prayer Christ has given us as the model for all prayer:

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:
Brothers and sisters, let us join together and pray to God as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray:

Rite of Confirmation:
Dear friends in Christ, let us pray together as the Lord Jesus Christ has taught.

Pastoral Care:
Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Christ taught us:
Let us pray to the Father using those words which Jesus himself used:
Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:
And now let us pray with confidence as Christ our Lord commanded:
Now let us pray to God as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:
With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us to pray:
Now let us pray together to the Father in the words given us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rite of Penance:
Let us now pray to God our Father in the words Christ gave us, and ask him for his forgiveness and protection from all evil.
Now, in obedience to Christ himself, let us join in prayer to the Father, asking him to forgive us as we forgive others.
Let us now pray to the Father in the words Christ gave us and ask forgiveness for our sins:
Let us now call upon our Father in the words that Jesus gave us, and ask him to forgive us our sins:
Now let us turn to God our Father and ask him to free us from evil and prepare us for the coming of his kingdom:
Now with Jesus, our brother, we come before our Father in heaven and ask him to forgive our sins:
Let us ask God our Father to forgive us and to free us from evil:
Order of Christian Funerals:

Friends (Brothers and sisters), our true home is heaven. Therefore let us pray to our heavenly Father as Jesus taught us:

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:

With faith and hope we pray to the Father in the words Jesus taught his disciples:

Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father:

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us pray:

Together let us pray for strength, for acceptance, and for the coming of the kingdom in the words our Savior taught us:

In love, God calls us his children, for that indeed is what we are. We ask for the strength we need by praying in the words Jesus gave us:

As sons and daughters of a loving God, we pray in the confident words of his Son:

When Jesus gathered his disciples around him, he taught them to pray:

Rite of Dedication of a Church:

Let us join the voice of the Church with that of Christ in praying to the Father using those words which the Son has given us. And so, with one voice, let us say:

Composing Invitations

How to approach an invitation: In addition to using the variety of invitations to the Lord's Prayer included in the liturgical books of the church, as listed above, the rubric "these or similar words" offers the possibility of composing others. What ought prospective composers of invitations to the Lord's prayer keep in mind?

• There should be no doubt that what is said is an invitation to join in the Lord's Prayer.

• It should clearly be addressed to the entire assembly.

• It needs to be brief, direct and easy to understand.

• The invitation should not turn into an address or admonition. An invitation is short and to the point; an address or admonition is longer and tries to instruct or provide commentary. An address or admonition is out of place before the Lord's Prayer.

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Several elements: Taken as a whole, the model invitations given above contain a number of separate elements; any single invitation, however, may contain only two or three of these.

- They invite us to pray, using expressions such as these:

  let us pray
  let us pray together
  let us join in prayer
  let us now call upon (God)
  let us turn to (God)
  we come before (God)
  we have the courage to say
  let us ask
  let us offer together our/the prayer
  let us make our prayers and praise complete by offering the Lord's prayer
  let us conclude our prayers
  we pattern our prayer . . . and say
  let us join together and pray

- They may name Christ, using different names or titles:

  Jesus
  Jesus, our brother
  Christ
  Christ himself
  Christ our/the Lord
  our Lord Christ
  our/the Lord Jesus Christ
  the Lord
  the Son
  (God's) Son

- They may say, in a variety of ways, that the Lord's Prayer comes from Jesus:

  the words our Savior gave us
  those words which Jesus himself used
  in the words given us
  in the words of Christ
  Jesus taught us
  let us pray as Christ our Lord asked
  as the Lord told us
  in obedience to Christ
  let us pray . . . as Christ our Lord commanded
  we pattern our prayer on the prayer of Christ our Lord
  the prayer Christ has given us as the model for all prayer

- The fact that the prayer is addressed to God the Father may be stated, or that in this prayer Jesus taught us the name "Father"; the Father may be given different names:

  we pray to the Father,
  heavenly Father
  our Father in heaven,
God our Father
God
a loving God
Jesus taught us to call God our Father

• The persons praying this prayer may be identified in some way:

us
together
brothers and sisters
friends, or friends in Christ
God's children
sons and daughters of a loving God
disciples of Jesus
the church

• The invitation may allude to some dimension of the content of the Lord's prayer:

longing for the coming of the kingdom
prepare us for the coming of his kingdom
forgive those who sin against us
ask forgiveness for our sins
forgive us as we forgive others
protection from all evil
free us from evil

• The invitation may allude to the sentiments of those who pray the Lord's prayer:

with confidence
we have the courage
with faith and hope
we ask for the strength we need
with longing for God's kingdom
we pray to the Father

Composing alternative invitations to the Lord's Prayer is an important opportunity and responsibility for the presider or liturgy planning group. They might wish to practice writing such invitations and then evaluate them according to the criteria suggested here.
Rites at the Door of the Church

Four of the major liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church begin at the door or entrance of the church building, or at least this is the church’s preference. Inasmuch as the church’s liturgies are quite deliberate about what is done where, making the door or entrance to the building the first option in these cases is quite significant.

The liturgies concerned are the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Rite of Baptism for Children, the Rite of Marriage, and the Rite of Reception of the Body at the Church of the Order of Christian Funerals. All are described as beginning at the door or entrance of the church building.

In pastoral practice these liturgies sometimes – perhaps often – in fact do not begin at the door of the church. Because it is so unusual, this preference may not even be noticed. Alternatively, this option may not be chosen because it seems too difficult or because the architecture of the church makes it awkward to carry out. Additionally, this option may be considered to be a piece of liturgical archaeology that may have worked in the past but is no longer applicable today. Finally, its purpose may not be understood; people may not think there is any point to it and hence be reluctant to carry out what they think is an empty ritual.

Rationale and meaning: To help pastoral liturgists and local church communities understand these rites and celebrate them well, the rationale and meaning of “rites at the door of the church” will be considered here in some detail. Some suggestions regarding pastoral implementation will also be offered.

Rites and Rubrics

The rubrics describing the beginnings of the four liturgies named above will be quoted directly from the liturgical books.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:
Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

The opening rubrics are as follows:

The candidates, their sponsors, and a group of the faithful gather outside the church (or inside at the entrance or elsewhere) or at some other site suitable for this rite.

When all are so gathered there is the greeting, the opening dialogue in which the candidates are asked their names and what they seek, the candidates’ first
acceptance of the gospel, affirmation by the sponsors and the assembly, signing of the candidates with the cross, and an opening prayer. After this the catechumens and everyone present are invited to the celebration of the word of God, as indicated in the following rubrics:

The celebrant next invites the catechumens and their sponsors to enter the church (or the place where the liturgy of the word will be celebrated). He uses the following or similar words, accompanying them with some gesture of invitation.

N. and N., come into the church, to share with us at the table of God's word.

Rite of Baptism for Children

Introductory rubrics direct the following:

The people may sing a psalm or hymn suitable for the occasion. Meanwhile the celebrating priest or deacon, . . . accompanied by the ministers, goes to the entrance of the church or to that part of the church where the parents and godparents are waiting with those who are to be baptized.

Introductory rites: Again, the greeting, opening dialogue and signing of the children with the cross follow, as well as any informal words of welcome to parents, relatives and friends and members of the Christian community. The invitation to the celebration of the word of God comes next:

The celebrant invites the parents, godparents, and the others to take part in the liturgy of the word. If circumstances permit, there is a procession to the place where this will be celebrated . . . .

Rite of Marriage

The beginning of the rite is described as follows:

At the appointed time, the priest, vested for Mass, goes with the ministers to the door of the church or, if more suitable, to the altar. There he meets the bride and bridegroom in a friendly manner, showing that the Church shares their joy.

The procession will follow this meeting and the words of greeting that accompany it:

If there is a procession to the altar, the ministers go first, followed by the priest, and then the bride and the bridegroom.

Order of Christian Funerals:

Funeral Mass

Reception of the body at the church: At some point in the complex of funeral liturgies, the body will be brought to the church. Whenever this happens, the rite of reception of the body at the church will be celebrated. The following rubrics are from the beginning of the funeral mass, one of the most common occasions on which the rite of reception is celebrated:
If the rite of reception of the body takes place at the beginning of the funeral Mass, the priest, with assisting ministers, goes to the door of the church . . . . The priest may greet the family informally. Then, when all have assembled at a convenient place near the entrance to the church, the priest begins the introductory rites given here.

These introductory rites include or may include the greeting, sprinkling with holy water, and placing of the pall. The entrance procession follows:

The priest and assisting ministers precede the coffin and the mourners into the church. During the procession a psalm, song, or responsory is sung.

What Do the Rites at the Door Mean?

Many levels of meaning: The rites at the door of the church express a number of levels of meaning. Not all are equally important or compelling, and not all apply to each of the four liturgies concerned.

Embodied Worship

Worship through walking: A basic principle that needs to be kept in mind is that Roman Catholic liturgy is embodied; it is the worship of the whole person. We use our bodies to express our religious feelings; we encounter God through our bodies. In the rites at the door of the church we especially worship God through walking: walking to the door, walking through the door, and walking from the door into the rest of the church.

Identification, Recognition and Introduction

Identification: When someone whom we have never seen before, or someone we don't know very well, comes to the door of our home they will identify themselves or we will ask who they are; a process of identification takes place. If we know the person at the door, we will recognize him or her and usually use the person's name: "Hello, Mary." If other members of the family are present at or near the door, we may say, "It's Mary" or "the plumber." We may then introduce the visitor to others inside the house.

Introductions: At sporting events, ice skaters or football players, for example are formally introduced even though we already know their names or have their names in the program, and even though we may have seen them practice or warm up just a few minutes before. Such introductions indicate that a new phase in the event is beginning and that it is more important than what came before.

The rites at the door of the church include elements of identification, recognition and introduction. Adult candidates for baptism, infants and their parents, prospective bride and groom, and deceased member of the parish all arrive at the door of the church. Candidates for baptism are asked to identify themselves, or their parents do this on their behalf. "What is your name?" "What do
you seek?" Bride and groom and deceased member and relatives are recognized as our sisters and brothers.

**The names** of all of these persons are pronounced loudly and clearly by the presider both in recognition and as a way of introducing them to the rest of the assembly; sometimes he will add other introductory words as well. This introduction is really mutual; the church also introduces itself to the person at the door in the process of greeting them.

**The door or entrance** of the church is an appropriate place to carry out this kind of identification, recognition and introduction, though certainly this can be done elsewhere as well.

**Hospitality and Welcome**

**Further hospitality:** Now that everyone has been introduced to one another, further acts of hospitality and welcome can follow. Again, think about how one welcomes guests and visitors into one's home. We value them, recognize their dignity as human beings, value their company and friendship (or the services they may carry out), etc., are glad that they have come. We welcome them into the house. We open the door, ask them in, hold the door for them as they enter, take their coats, show them to a seat, offer them refreshment.

**The rites at the door** of the church are a way of showing hospitality and extending welcome to special persons on special days. We are glad to see them and have them present; we want them to join our liturgical assembly and community. Going to the door is a completely natural act by which to show hospitality and welcome.

**Reaching Out**

**The church goes out:** The candidates for baptism do not come to the door of the church alone but rather with others: sponsors, friends, parents. In an important way the church has gone out to meet them; it has reached out to bring in new members. The church community has cared for them during their search and growth in Christ.

**Reaching out:** The church community has also reached out to parents during their prior married life, the period of pregnancy, delivery and the days or months between the birth and the baptism. Likewise, the church has reached out to the prospective bride and groom as they and their families have prepared for marriage. The deceased member of the parish has of course been cared for during his or her life.

**The door of the church** is the physical place out of which members of the community go to reach out to those beyond its membership. From the door of the church members of the community move out to live their daily Christian lives.

**Transcending Barriers**

**Doors are barriers as well as openings:** they exclude as well as welcome; they are means of shutting people out as well as of bringing them in. In the
rites at the door of the church the doors of the community's meeting house are thrown wide open in welcome. This is a physical sign that other kinds of barriers are transcended as well. In the church – at least ideally – only faith counts. Barriers that separate people in society – race, color, sex, age, education, wealth, etc. – do not count in the church; in fact they are ignored or repudiated. The openness of our door is a sign of God's all-compassing grace.

Solemn Entrance for Special People

You are special: Formal and unusual entrance rites add solemnity to these special liturgies of the church; they proclaim that the people who are the center of attention in these rites are special people for the community. The rites at the door of the church tell us all: "You are very special people; this is a very special occasion." There is beauty and special music; there is color and excitement.

New Beginnings

A new phase of life: Entering a door sometimes signifies a kind of new experience in life, for example the new home after being married, the new school, the new office or plant entrance. The rites at the door of the church proclaim that what is happening is the beginning of a new phase of the person's life, the beginning of a new kind of experience. This is true of the candidates for baptism and for the parents of infant candidates; it is also true of prospective brides and grooms. In a different way it is also true of the deceased member of the community, who is experiencing the beginning of eternal life.

On the Threshold

In transition: Students of human culture have discerned that there are times in people's lives when they exist in a state of transition; they are in the midst of a process of change; they have left one state but not yet attained the new state. They are in between, having left something behind but have not yet achieved their goal. The image the social scientists use to describe this is "standing on the threshold" or "liminality." This liminal state is associated with a certain amount of tension, uncertainly and insecurity, and the support of the community during these times is extremely important.

Threshold experiences: The process of becoming a Christian, of becoming husband and wife, of becoming a member of the heavenly realm of God all may be considered to include "threshold" experiences of one kind or another. The rites at the door of the church, when one is neither completely inside nor completely outside, is a way of expressing or acting out this kind of experience. And it is conducted with the full support of the local church community.

Life and Liturgy as Procession

Imagine the processions that are important in our culture: the ones that open sessions of parliament; those at the beginning of football games and some other sporting events; the grand spectacles at the beginning and conclusion of
the Olympic games; the processions at school graduations; parades that celebrate one or another important event in the life of our cities and society.

**Most of our liturgies are processional** in some sense or another. The members of the assembly come from their homes, enter the narthex of the church and then move to the pews, move to the altar-table for communion and then back to their places, and then leave to carry the love of Christ to all aspects of their lives. The priest and other ministers enter and leave in procession, there may be a procession of the gospel, and the gifts are brought up in procession.

**At weddings:** Procession is also an important dimension of the liturgy of marriage. The bride and groom come in with their family and friends, but leave by themselves, hand in hand.

**The funeral rite** is explicitly processional: from place of death to home (or mortuary) to the church and then to the grave or other place of committal. The passage from this life to life after death is seen very much as a kind of procession.

**Paschal mystery:** The processional nature of our liturgies reflects the processional nature of Christ’s paschal mystery: the exodus journey of Christ from death to resurrection.

**All of human life:** We are reminded that human life has the character of a procession as well. We are carried in the womb for nine months, carried in our parent’s arms, we learn to walk, we move from one place to another, we grow and develop through childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, old age and then die. Life is movement, development, change: life is procession.

**The rites at the door** of the church, which include processions to the front of the church or to seating in the midst of the assembly, are thus models and expressions of the processional nature of all of liturgy and all of life. Here we practice, in a formal and solemn way, all of the processions of our lives.

**Processions are also active events:** we take part in them actively and consciously. This kind of active participation is also a model and expectation of the kind of lives we will live following initiation into the church and into marriage.

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**Church Building and Building Church**

**People of God:** In the rites at the door of the church we focus on one particular part of the church building, on one aspect of its architecture. But neither the physical thing that is the door, or the physical thing that is the church building as a whole, are important in themselves. Both point to the real church, the people of God (or body of Christ or community of the faithful) assembled for worship; that is truly the church. The building and its parts are icons or symbols of the real church.

**The physical door of the church** therefore, always points to and signifies entry into the people of God; the building is a means to this end. The building is the house of the church, its meeting place; but the baptized people (including its ordained ministers) is the real church. It is in the church, as symbolized by the building, that we celebrate our trinitarian life, that we name ourselves as temples of the Holy Spirit, that we experience a foretaste of God’s reign, that
we hear and respond to God's word, bathe in the waters of baptism, share the eucharistic body and blood of Christ, and all the other liturgical acts of the Christian.

**Membership:** For the candidate for baptism, therefore, entering the door of the church signifies entering into membership in the church, becoming one of the holy people, being initiated as priest and prophet and king with Christ as our model, being made a servant-disciple of Jesus Christ.

At weddings, the rites at the door of the church strengthen the bond between the new couple and the local church community, reassure them that the church – the community, not just the building – is their home away from home. They show that the liturgy of the marriage is an act of the whole church, and that their new home will be a dimension of this church – a domestic church.

At funerals, the rites at the door announce that the deceased person had a life-long bond with the church and that the church will not forget any one of its members. We are also reassured that the life beyond death is still an experience of church.

**Modeled on baptism:** The rite of reception of the body of the funeral rites is explicitly modeled on the beginning of the rite of baptism. The last time our sister or brother enters the church is modeled quite closely on the first time he or she entered the church, that is, at his or her initiation into the church. This is indicated by texts used at the beginning of the rite of reception. For example:

On the day of his/her baptism
N. was welcomed into the Church,
given new life in Christ,
and clothed with the garment of salvation.

Today we greet the body of our brother/sister
and surround him/her with the Church's prayer.
We commend our brother/sister N. to the mercy of God
and pray that the promise made to him/her in baptism
will be fulfilled.

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**Pastoral Implementation**

**Celebrating the rites at the door of the church** well will depend on the size of the assembly and on the architecture of the church.

**Church buildings** often have two front doors or doorways: the one that opens on the environment outside, and the doorway between the narthex where the assembly comes together and the nave where the assembly actually celebrates its liturgies; this doorway may or may not actually include a door.

**Outside door or entrance to the nave?** If the assembly is small enough for everyone to gather at the outside door, these rites might be held there – weather permitting. In most cases this will not be possible, however. Inasmuch as the church really is the assembly rather than bricks and mortar, with a larger assembly it seems quite appropriate to celebrate the rites at the door of the church at the entranceway between narthex and nave. The assembly inside
can be asked to stand and turn around so they can see what is happening at the doorway.

A second challenge is audibility. As with other parts of our liturgical celebra-
tions, all members of the assembly should ideally be able to hear the words of
the priest, candidates, sponsors, parents, etc. at the door of the church,
though the funeral rite indicates that the presider may also speak "informally"
to the mourners.

The need for everyone to hear means either that everyone concerned will
have to speak loudly, or that appropriate amplification needs to be provided.
For weddings and funerals, only the priest speaks and it is sufficient if only he
has a microphone. For the rite of acceptance into the catechumenate and rite
of baptism for children, however, it is extremely important that the candidates,
parents and sponsors have access to microphones as well.

In conclusion, the rites at the door of the church are neither arbitrary nor anti-
quarian; they potentially have great meaning for us today. Though there are
certain challenges in celebrating these rites well, with a little effort and imagi-
nation, it really should not be too difficult.¹

¹ I am grateful to the following for sharing their thoughts and experiences on this subject: the
Revs. J. Bedford Doucette (New Glasgow, NS), Claude Poirier (Scarborough, ON), L. L. Sullivan
(Regina, SK), Jim Hutton (Sault Ste. Marie, ON), and William Marrevee (Ottawa, ON).
Brief Book Notices


A more popular presentation of the Order of Christian Funerals.


Contains the prayers for Blessed André Bessette, Kateri Tekakwitha, and Marie-Rose Durocher, plus the proper readings for the Office of Readings for St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Andrew Kim Taegon, and Companions.


This volume on Sunday and Weekday Meditations on the Masses for Ordinary Time completes the series by the author and publishers: Jesus, Present and Coming (Advent-Christmas); Believe the Good News (Lent-Holy Week); and Risen and with You Always (Easter). It is designed not only for preachers of the word, but for listeners as well.


The author engages in a frank discussion for ecumenical relations between Roman Catholic, Anglican Orthodox Churches and Reformed Church from the perspective of communio or koinonia. Beginning with koinonia in the New Testament as grounded in baptism the author looks at the challenges facing the Churches in ministry, justification by faith, and sacramental fellowship.


This is not a book with stories to illustrate homilies, but a serious look at the theology of the story. The author maintains that Christian stories provide the central and distinctive structure and content of Christian faith. Without the stories of Christianity, there could be no Christianity. Readers will appreciate Tilley's refreshing approach.


The author points to the deficiency of contemporary theology books on the subject of the Trinity. Yet the Trinity, by experience, must be spoken of. The triune God is not an abstract theory; many of us think of God as one infinite person or force with no sense of the personal distinction in God. In a very readable work, the author examines the experience of the Trinity in human history, in the paschal mystery, in the Christian community, in sacraments, in our own bibles, and in the poorest and weakest among us.


Words around the Table is a companion volume to Words Around the Fire, published last year by the same author. Those who enjoyed Gail Ramshaw's poetic writing will be equally pleased with the present superb volume which exposes the words and deeds of the eucharistic liturgy.

Language for a "Catholic" Church: A Program of Study by Thomas H.
This is a thought provoking look at the problem of language in the Church. The book is designed as a study program for a parish to face the issue of inclusive language. The main theme is that language goes to the very heart of our "catholicity" and sacramentality as the Body of Christ. Inclusive language is a complex, controversial and emotional issue today, unfortunately filled with misinformation. Although one may disagree with some of the author's conclusions and implementation, the book does offer some sound historical, philosophical and theological arguments for inclusive language.


This book is not about church bells, but it is about the process of "connecting" with parishioners. Hence it is a book about social communication in the "media" twentieth century. Chapters include: The Communications Process; The Pastor as Communicator; The Parish 'Audience.' The aim of the book is to give pastors and administrators an understanding of the communication process, tips for the most effective ways to communicate, and practical strategies for building parish communication through effective communication techniques.


This is a useful compendium of liturgical documents on the liturgical environment. Hopefully it will not take the place of the important process that must be part of any parish renovation or building program, but will be used as an instrument of education.
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